COPING STRATEGIES FOR THE LOSS OF YOUR PET®

The death of a beloved pet can be as painful as any other loss you may experience. Our pets serve many roles in our lives. They are our friends, companions, teachers, children & soul mates. It’s important to honor our grief and remember that LOVE is LOVE. It doesn’t matter whether the ones we love and have lost have 2 legs or 4.

Below are some strategies for getting through this time. Those of us who have been through a loss of this magnitude understand that, while you don’t “get over” the loss, it is possible to get through this time and learn to live with the love of your pet forever in your heart.

1. **Taking Care of Yourself** - It’s important to give yourself the same loving care you gave your beloved pet. Although you may not feel up to it, be sure and remember to eat, drink plenty of water, try to get some exercise & get plenty of rest. At this time of grief, we are very vulnerable to getting sick and you want to avoid having to deal with an illness as well.

2. **Put Off Making Big Decisions** - Don’t rush in to making those major decisions to change your job, move to a new place or even “get rid of your pet’s things.” If you must, put things away for a while. Our grief does not allow us to think clearly at this time, and we may make decisions we will later regret.

3. **Change Your Routines** - It’s often difficult when we come home and our pet is not there to greet us or to watch TV with us in our favorite chairs. Try coming in a different entrance or sitting in a different chair or room. As simple as it sounds, changing these routines does really help.

4. **Break It Down** - Those going through this type of pain often experience a type of “Grief Fog” where concentration is very difficult. Try breaking down everyday tasks into small pieces. Doing this makes it much easier to get things done rather than tackling them all at once.

5. **Honor Your Pet’s Memory** - Whether you decide to bury your pet or have him/her cremated, have some type of ritual to honor your pet’s life. You can do this by yourself or invite others who cared about your pet to join you. Possibly create a memorial book or read some poems/a eulogy. Other ideas: Think about creating a memorial garden, putting together a scrapbook or a shadow box that honors the relationship you shared.

PetLoss Partners
Sandra Grossman, PhD - 818-421-1516
Certified Pet Loss and Bereavement Specialist
www.petlosspartners.org
6. **Allow Yourself Time to Grieve** - Grief has no “normal” timeline. Allow yourself the time you need to grieve. If you cannot take time off work, schedule certain times of the day and give yourself permission to feel the grief. Possibly use your break or lunch for this & allow some time in the evening too. This allows you to feel the grief in smaller time increments without it overwhelming you.

7. **Be Careful What You Watch or Listen To** - Grief can make us hypersensitive. Try to stay away from scary or sad TV programs/movies for a while. While you are driving in your car, you may find your emotions overwhelming you. Try not to listen to love songs or many of the sadder slower country music songs.

8. **Be Careful Who You Talk To** - Our society doesn’t deal well with death/grief in general. Most people want to put a bandage on the pain to make it go away. And when it comes to the loss of a “fur” kid, people can be even harsher. Carefully choose with whom you feel safe enough to express your feelings. Try and only express your feelings to people you know will understand.

9. **Give Yourself the Same Unconditional Love Your Pet Gave You** - This is the time to be kind & loving to yourself and not to judge yourself at all. You know your pet would want you to do that for yourself. Don’t take on projects that you don’t feel you can do. Don’t go places where you feel you would be uncomfortable or feel you have to “act” a certain way just because “it’s the right thing to do.” The right thing to do is to take good care of yourself with the same kind of love & care you gave to your beloved pet.

10. **Find Support Around You** - It’s important to remember that you are not alone. There are many people who have also lost and grieved for a pet who they feel was a member of their family. There are books that specifically address the area of pet loss. In addition, by Googling “pet loss support” you should be directed to a Certified Pet Loss Counselor or pet loss support group in your area. Always remember that you don’t have to go through this alone. PetLoss Partners offers individual sessions, virtual pet loss support groups, and pet loss chatrooms to help you begin to heal.

---

**PetLoss Partners**

**Sandra Grossman, PhD** - **818-421-1516**

*Certified Pet Loss and Bereavement Specialist*

[www.petlosspartners.org](http://www.petlosspartners.org)